

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL HAMILTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2881

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT/BD

SUBJECT: PUBLICATION OF REPORT BY ROYAL COMMISSION
INVESTIGATING DISTURBANCES OF DECEMBER 1977.

1. THE FINAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL (LORD PITT) COMMISSION
ON THE DECEMBER DISTURBANCES WAS PUBLISHED IN THE
NEWSPAPERS HERE ON WEDNESDAY, 2 AUGUST. COPIES OF THE
REPORT, PLUS A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF ITS RECOMMENDATIONS,
AS WELL AS A PROMISED REBUTTAL BY THE GOVERNMENT OF
BERMUDA WILL BE AIRPOUCHED TO WASHINGTON EARLY NEXT
WEEK WHEN THEY APPEAR IN PRINTED FORM.

2. THE REPORT EMPHASIZED THE DESIRABILITY OF INDEPENDENCE
FOR BERMUDA AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS BE A MAJOR TOPIC
IN THE NEXT ELECTION (WHICH WILL PROBABLY BE HELD IN
DECEMBER 1980). IT CALLS FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE U.K. AND BERMUDA (INCLUDING
THE OPPOSITION PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY) WITHIN THE NEAR
FUTURE TO DISCUSS SUCH MATTERS AS THE VOTING RIGHTS OF
U.K. CITIZENS WHO HAVE RESIDED HERE FOR 3 YEARS OR MORE
AND, PROBABLY, THE REDRAWING OF CONSTITUENT BOUNDARIES
FOR LOCAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. IT EMPHASIZES THE
NEED TO PREPARE THE BERMUDA REGIMENT (A 400 MAN LOCAL
MILITIA PRESENTLY USED PRINCIPALLY FOR CEREMONIAL
PURPOSES) AND THE POLICE TO HANDLE FUTURE INTERNAL
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DISTURBANCES TO OBVIATE THE NEED TO CALL IN FOREIGN
(I.E. BRITISH) TROOPS. IT CALLS FOR AN INHERITANCE
TAX TO EXCEED THE PRESENT 3 PER CENT STAMP DUTY ON LARGE
INHERITANCES. IT REITERATES THE NEED FOR A RADICAL
RE-STRUCTURING OF BERMUDA'S ECONOMY, IN TERMS OF POWER
SHIFTS AWAY FROM THE "FRONT STREET" MERCHANTS TO BLACKS,
AND A GREATER EFFORT IN PROMOTING BLACKS TO PLACES OF

INFLUENCE WITHIN THE ECONOMY. GREATER GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS IS SUGGESTED, WHICH WOULD IMPLY AND INCOME TAX, ALTHOUGH THIS LATTER POINT IS NOT SPECIFICALLY RECOMMENDED.

3. COMMENT: CONSOFF HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THE REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY MR. WALTER ROBINSON, FOUNDER OF THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY, AND RECENTLY APPOINTED A SUPREME COURT JUDGE, AND DR. BANTON, ORIGINALLY OF THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, BUT NOW OF BRISTOL UNIVERSITY. THE TONE AND CONTENT OF THE REPORT SEEM TO CONFIRM THIS. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE REPORT WILL CREATE CONSIDERABLE CONTROVERSY HERE.

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